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ABSTRACT

Project Discovery is a community-based educational intervention program for low income and minority students. It operates outside the traditional public education system. The following projects comprise the program: (1) Project Discovery for ninth to eleventh graders, which is a College Option Orientation program; and (2) Discovery Groups for sixth to eighth graders, which provide peer support. The goal is to make the college option conceivable and achievable for disadvantaged young people. Project Discovery students receive personal attention and academic counseling, and attend a series of workshops on several college campuses, covering study skills, admissions criteria, goal setting, financial aid, and choosing a college. The 1983-86 program, funded by the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), served 629 students in Roanoke, Virginia, and is being replicated in eight other localities in Virginia. Students served by the program to date are predominantly black (74 percent), female (68 percent), and tenth-graders (55 percent). Sixty-one percent of graduating seniors for whom follow-up was possible are attending college. Students overwhelmingly (98 percent) felt they received much individualized attention and would recommend the program to a friend. Nearly all (99 percent) gave the staff a high or above average rating. The project is now being funded by the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education and the Virginia Department of Education. Three case studies written by counselors, a pamphlet soliciting contributions for the project, and numerous samples of evaluations are included. (FMW)

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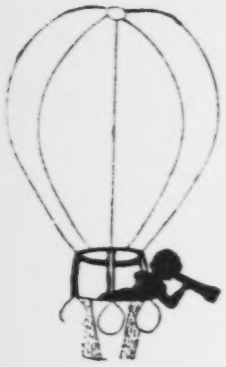

PROJECT DISCOVERY

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FIPSE FINAL REPORT

Project Discovery: College Option Orientation Program

ED299346

Grantee Organization:

Total Action Against Poverty, Inc.(TAP)
702 Shenandoah Ave., NW
P. O. Box 2868
Roanoke, VA 24001

Grant Number: G008302717

Project Dates:

Starting Date: September 1, 1983
Ending Date: December 31, 1986
Number of months: 40

Project Director:

Ann Poskocil
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Fund Program Officer: Lynn DeMeester

Grant Award:

Year 1	$70,259
Year 2	81,550
Year 3	88,685
Total	$240,494

(Includes $8,000 Dissemination Grant)

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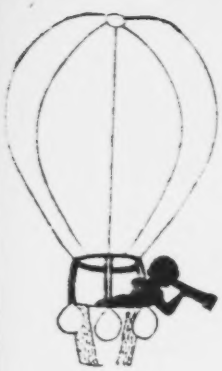

PROJECT DISCOVERY

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Project Discovery: College Option Orientation Program

Summary

Project Discovery is a community-based educational intervention for low-income and minority students in grades 8 to 12. The goal is to make the college option conceivable and achievable for disadvantaged young people. Students attend a series of six workshops on college campuses, and receive personal attention and academic counseling. The 1983-86 FIPSE program in Roanoke, Virginia served 629 students, and is being replicated in eight other localities. Project Discovery, Inc., the non-profit organization formed in 1985 to administer the expansion, has received funds from the Virginia Department of Education since July 1986. Students are predominantly black (74%), female (68%), and tenth graders (55%). Sixty-one percent (61%) of graduating students for whom follow-up was possible are attending college. Students overwhelmingly (98%) felt they received much individualized attention and would recommend the program to a friend. Nearly all (99%) gave the staff a high or above average rating.

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Roanoke, Virginia 24001

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Executive Summary

Project Discovery: College Option Orientation Program

Grantee: Total Action Against Poverty, Inc. (TAP)
P.O. Box 2868
Roanoke, VA 24001

Project Director: Ann Poskocil, Director of Planning
(703) 345-6781

Executive Director, Project Discovery, Inc.: Valerie Rasheed
(703) 345-6781

A. Project Overview

PROJECT DISCOVERY is proving its value as an innovative, replicable, and cost effective program. PROJECT DISCOVERY helps low-income and minority youths who have historically been excluded from access to postsecondary education to set college goals for themselves, to take appropriate college preparatory courses in high school, to increase their self-esteem, and to become the first in their family to enter college. PROJECT DISCOVERY was developed by a community action agency, Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke Valley (TAP).

PROJECT DISCOVERY's College Option Orientation Program began working with 200 students per year in October, 1983, and now also boasts a network of nine PROJECT DISCOVERY programs organized under PROJECT DISCOVERY, Inc. and operated by community action agencies (CAPs) which adapt the basic program design to fit their needs. In close cooperation with local school systems, colleges and universities (both public and private), and community advisory boards, Project Discovery offers academic support counseling and campus workshops on Goal Setting, Study Skills, College Life, Choosing a College, Admissions and Financial Aid, plus parental involvement and cultural enrichment activities.

Participants are low-income and minority students in grades 6 through 12 who would be first generation college students. The Virginia Department of Education funds for program operations are supplemented by the nine sites across the state with funds from government agencies and the private sector, plus in-kind from colleges.

B. Purpose

Project Discovery was designed to increase access to postsecondary education for an underserved population, minority and low-income students. Staff seek to instill in students an awareness of the crucial importance of sound high school preparation for college, not only in order to be accepted, but to stay and graduate.

Objectives for students are: (1) gaining self-confidence and building positive self-concepts; (2) developing an achievement orientation; (3) learning to set goals; (4) choosing adequate college preparatory courses; (5) improving coping skills; (6) improving interpersonal and communication skills.

Significance of activity. National studies have documented the growing problem of decreasing numbers of minority students going to college, and remaining to graduate. The recent Bell report[1] stated that demographic data show the "highest birth-rate, the lowest high school graduation rate, the lowest rate of participation in higher education, and the highest incarceration rate all describe a single subset of the U.S. population - the growing underclass."

Minority college students as a percent of minority high school students has declined since 1975. The Virginia Council on Higher Education has found discrepant rates of dropping out or flunking for black students. In Virginia entrance rates of first time freshmen at state-supported institutions have increased for whites between 1978 and 1985 (40.1% to 51.3%), but decreased for blacks (31.3% to 30.6%).

C. Background and Origins

Planning Project Discovery began in 1979, when staff from Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) and Roanoke College met to develop a program responsive to the need both institutions saw to increase the numbers of black youngsters going to college. An initial funding source was found in the Community Services Administration, which in 1981 gave $50,000 for planning and a small pilot. Not until the Fall of 1983, after our third attempt at winning a FIPSE grant was successful, were we able to hire staff and actually implement the program for 200 high school students per year. Over 1,300 students participated between October 1983 and May 1987.

The first program was in Roanoke, a city of 100,000 in Southwest Virginia. Run by TAP, it was entirely funded by FIPSE with significant in-kind from Roanoke College and from TAP. In the Fall of 1984, a presentation at the Virginia Association of Community Agencies meeting resulted in enthusiastic demands by other CAPs to have Project Discovery too. From that was born Project Discovery, Inc., a non-profit agency housed at TAP in Roanoke, with a Board composed of CAP Directors. This expansion occurred in the second of the three-year FIPSE grant, and was not in our original three year plan.

July, 1986 marked the beginning of support from the Virginia Department of Education. This support was achieved through dint of maximum use of the contacts of Cabell Brand, TAP Board President, and persistent educating of legislators and other decision makers about the need for the program, and how Project Discovery was uniquely able to meet the need. Numerous "show and tell" sessions featured student participants, who were eager to talk about what the program meant to them. This was a most effective selling tool.

D. Project Description

Project Discovery is an educational program working outside the traditional public education system. Kids who may be turned off to school have been turned on to education when they learn to plan their futures and realize they have options. School superintendents have said that this program complements the school system's efforts, and can work with students and parents in ways that they cannot.

[1]"To Secure the Blessings of Liberty." Report of National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities, Terrel H. Bell, Chairman, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, November 1986.

Two separate programs comprise PROJECT DISCOVERY, a College Option Orientation Program (CO-OP) for 9th to 11th graders (FIPSE-funded), and Discovery Groups for 6th to 8th graders.

College option orientation program. Each student (1) visits three to seven college campuses; (2) participates in workshops about: Goal Setting/Life Planning, Study Skills, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Choosing a College/College Life; (3) receives academic support counseling; (4) attends cultural enrichment activities; (5) receives an SAT fee waiver; (6) learns to use Guidance Information System (GIS) computers for college selection; (7) at a student-parent banquet receives a certificate of completion and college coping books. Program and college staff conduct each workshop to meet goals developed by PROJECT DISCOVERY.

Junior high students join "Discovery Groups," which serve as an early intervention catalyst for disadvantaged sixth to eighth graders who have been identified as having potential and needing special attention. These students become part of a peer support group and participate in activities that include campus visits, cultural events, career education, and experiential workshops on topics such as life planning, communication skills, and choosing high school courses.

A kev to Project Discovery's success is the active involvement of individuals and institutions working together to provide enriching experiences for the students. Colleges furnish meals, lodging, and workshop leaders; parents serve as chaperones for out-of-town trips; local churches, businesses and community groups support the program through cash and in-kind donations; and the public school systems cooperate by referring students to the program and sharing resources such as transportation.

E. Project Results

Project Discovery has proved to be an innovative, cost-effective, and replicable answer to the problem of declining minority enrollments in postsecondary education, as well as the high school dropout problems.

The following sample evaluation results attest to the effectiveness of the program: Based on available follow-up data for students in the Roanoke program, 61% of the participants who graduated in 1985 and 1986 went on to attend a postsecondary institution, while 14% joined the military service. Of the 1986 class, only 4% were found to be unemployed, and none were known to have dropped out of school.

Evaluators of the program have given Project Discovery high marks in influencing changes in attitudes about college by students and parents, additions of academic classes, and selection of colleges, as well as in staff and program effectiveness.

The program has garnered the enthusiastic support of educators, legislators, child advocates, and the young participants themselves, whose horizons continue to be widened by their Project Discovery experience.

FIPSE FINAL REPORT

A. Project Overview

Project Discovery began in 1979 when the President of the Board of the community action agency in Roanoke, Virginia invited the new President of Roanoke College to bring some staff to meet with TAP staff to discuss a problem. The problem was that black students, and poor students in general, were not preparing to take part in the American dream because they were not going to college. And if they did go to college, too many of them were unprepared to remain and graduate.

Out of that first tentative meeting grew a major program development effort which resulted in the design of Project Discovery, followed by a search for funding to implement the program. This search led to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, where after two final proposals were turned down, a third was funded. In 1983 FIPSE funded Toal Action Against Poverty (TAP) to operate a 3-year pilot program to serve 600 students in the Roanoke City Public Schools.

Delighted with the reaction of students and school personnel to the new program, a presentation about Project Discovery was made to community action agency staff members assembled for a regular meeting of their state association, VACAA (Virginia Association of Community Action Agencies). Their response was immediate and enthusiastic: they wanted to know how they too could start a Project Discovery program. They all knew young people who needed this program. In that fall of 1984, an informal network was

formed; Project Discovery and TAP staff pledged themselves to help the other agencies.

This network was incorporated as Project Discovery, Inc. in 1985, with the manager of the FIPSE program as the Acting Executive Director, and the Board of Directors composed of community action agency directors. An intensive and persistent educational campaign aimed at Virginia legislators and educators resulted finally in the appropriation of funds by the Virginia General Assembly, beginning July 1986, several months before the end of FIPSE funding. In 1986-87, Project Discovery, Inc. is funded for $277,000, and in 1987-88 for $427,000; funds come from the Virginia Department of Education. Project Discovery, Inc. subcontracts funds to the agencies operating programs in Virginia.

In the first year of state funding, 1986-87, 600 students, grades 6 to 12, are participating in seven sites, at a cost in state funds of $467 per student. Program operators must develop other resources in their communities. These have included Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); Job Training and Partnership ACT (JTPA); local corporations and businesses; churches and foundations. In addition, significant amounts of in-kind assistance are received from the colleges which host Project Discovery groups: staff to conduct workshops, facilities use, meals or discounted meals, sometimes lodging and tickets to campus events. Some programs, such as TAP's, benefit from the loan of vans for trips, and volunteer assistance.

The outcome of FIPSE's support is that Project Discovery has proved its value as an innovative, replicable, and cost-effective program. It addresses the critical national problems of historical under-representation, and declining enrollments and retention of minority students in postsecondary education, as well as the growing number of dropouts.

Project Discovery is now being replicated in eight other Virginia communities and also in Quincy, Illinois. Eleven other agencies in other states are interested in starting a program. Program activities - primarily goal-oriented workshops, campus visits, and individual attention - help low-income junior and senior high students set goals for themselves, increase self-esteem, and become the first in their family to go to college. More than 1,300 students in Virginia have participated.

Regarding the ultimate outcome of college entrance, it is important to understand that Project Discovery students are essentially in a funnel situation, that is, students may participate in Project Discovery as many as four or five years before they are high school seniors ready to apply to colleges. Follow-up has been a major hassle for program staff; despite heroic efforts, no outcome information is available for one-fourth of the students slated to have completed high school in 1985 and 1986. However, we do know that 89% of the remaining 1985 class, and 51% of the 1986 class entered postsecondary institutions and 14% entered the military service. Since the target group is comprised of economically disadvantaged or first generation college bound students,

predominantly black (74%), this outcome is very good. Follow-up data on the 1986 class found only 4% (four) to be unemployed, and none known to have dropped out of school.

We have found that our students have benefited from Project Discovery in many ways. They become better prepared for college by taking college preparatory courses; their grades improve (despite the harder courses); they learn how to apply for and get financial aid for college; they learn to set goals for themselves and to see options for their futures; they show an increased motivation to succeed and to remain in school. Also, their exposure to college campuses and to cultural enrichment activities gives them a wider view of the world, making it easier for them to leave home and succeed in college.

As the program has matured, Project Discovery has been aided by graduates who are now students at colleges visited by the program; these students have been eager to show their campus and to relate their experiences. We have been gratified that the Project Discovery "graduates" want to network with students from other Project Discovery programs who are at their university or in the same city. This networking should decrease minority isolation and thus aid retention. The Roanoke student now attending the University of Houston in Texas has even offered to help to organize a Project Discovery program in that city. Our students are indeed the best advertisement for Project Discovery!

B. Purpose

Project Discovery addresses the issues of access to postsecondary education, the problem of reducing the gap between minority and majority college entrance and graduation. In reflecting now upon this problem, I am frustrated anew that it clearly defies easy solutions. In Virginia there has been a sincere and determined effort on the part of the Governors, the State Council of Higher Education, the Better Information Committee convened by the Council and the Department of Education (of which I am a member) as well as by public higher education institutions, to increase the members of minority students going to college. In spite of varied initiatives - funded programs, publications, conferences, training materials, etc., the statistics are getting worse, not better. An April 19, 1987 Richmond Times Dispatch headline proclaims, "Colleges' efforts to enroll minorities stagnating after 2 decades of gains." (See attachment.) This is occurring across the country, not just in Virginia. It is truly disheartening. There are obviously many societal factors involved.

In this context, our successes with Project Discovery students are particularly satisfying. All staff members are deeply gratified when a youngster is helped on the path to a better future. It is a worthwhile endeavor we have been engaged in; the students are helped one by one. The special individual attention and caring concern of the Project Discovery counselors make the difference, especially for young people who enter the program unmotivated and listless, with no inkling of the many options open to them.

Another learning about this problem is really a relearning: youngsters have to be reached as early as possible, preferably by the seventh grade. Their choice of school subjects is critical, and this is also the point where many are lost to negative influences. Our original program model targeted this age group; however, funding was more easily obtained to work with high school students.

Following are some distressing national statistics which illuminate our purpose and goals for Project Discovery.

- Minority college students as a percent of minority high school students have declined since 1975.
- By 1990, racial and ethnic minorities will account for 30 percent of all 18-22 year olds in the United States.
- Blacks still lag behind whites in both attainment and achievement at each stage of education from high school through graduate studies.
- Up to 40 percent of minority adolescents have been found to be functionally illiterate.
- There are 50 million households in the U. S. where no family member holds a bachelor's degree.
- In 1985 the number of 14-24 year olds who compose America's entry-level labor pool is shrinking, while the number of young people who are disconnecting from school is on the rise.
- Only 19 percent of adults over 25 in this country have a bachelor's degree.

PROJECT DISCOVERY was developed to respond to the seemingly intractable problem of the unequal access of minorities and low-income youths to college admission and graduation, and the related one of alarmingly high dropout rates for these young people. TAP staff had long worked with youth and with adults who were once youth who never fulfilled their potential. We wanted to find some solutions to this waste.

Across the country, as in Virginia, students still face formidable barriers to college entrance and success. Some of these are:

(1) <u>Inappropriate secondary school preparation for admission to college.</u> A 1980 study found that only 40% of Virginia's black seniors who wanted further education were enrolled in an academic program, and that students often had goals inappropriate to their course of study and class rank.

(2) System overload; high student/counselor ratio. Students are not aware when they are improperly advised, and many parents are uninformed. Caseloads for secondary counselors in Virginia are 1 to 425. First generation potential college students need an added intervention to offset the advantage other students have in parental expectations and college-educated models.

(3) Unequal access to higher education. Virginia has not met affirmative action goals, and in fact the number of black freshmen is dropping. Nine other states also have not achieved compliance - this at a time when many financial and academic barriers were dropping.

(4) Inappropriate secondary school preparation for college selection and graduation. Attrition of low-income and minority students is high; it is easier to be admitted than to stay and graduate. Many experience "culture shock" upon entering the college environment.

(5) Lack of knowledge about college, college role models and encouragement.

Although minority and low-income students were admitted to colleges and universities in record numbers in the 1970s, statistics in the 1980s show a significant downslide. Because pursuit of higher education is clearly a path to economic self-sufficiency, it is important that the groups which have been historically denied access to opportunity be encouraged and assisted.

To meet this challenge, however, it is not enough to simply enroll more minority students; it is easier to get admitted to college than it is to remain and graduate. The Virginia Council on Higher Education study of freshmen in the 1983-84 school year found discrepant rates of dropping out or flunking for black students. Virginia's Secretary of Education speculated that if socioeconomic indicators were similarly used, we would find low-income students of all ethnic groups faring equally poorly. Examples from the study:

Radford University: 23% black vs. 13% white; George Mason University: 39% black vs. 25% white. The percentage of freshmen in the 1983-84 year who were on academic probation was 21% of black students, and 9% of white students.

College Board Study. In October 1986, the College Board released the results of a two-year study. "Keeping the Options Open: Recommendations." They warn of serious ramifications for the country unless pre-college guidance and counseling services in the nation's schools are extensively revised so that students at the bottom of the economic ladder may be encouraged and prepared to go to college:

> Unless students from these segments of society are prepared and encouraged to enter higher education, the percentage of college graduates among the adult labor force will decline. Such a decline poses a threat to our standard of living, the development of our communities, and the nation's ability to successfully compete with other countries.

They recommend that schools and governments: Strengthen collaboration among schools, community agencies, colleges, businesses, and other community resources to enhance services available to students. In fact, five of their eight recommendations are directly relevant to the Project Discovery program and strategy. (Chronicle of Higher Education - October 29, 1986.)

C. Background and Origins

Since 1979, Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) has been committed to the development of Project Discovery, an innovative program designed to help low-income and minority youths who have historically been excluded from higher education to set goals for themselves, to stay in school, to take appropriate college

preparatory courses, to increase their self-esteem, and to become the first in their family to enter college. Project Discovery began as a partnership between TAP, a community action agency, Roanoke College, a small liberal arts college in Salem, VA and the Roanoke City Public Schools.

From the outset this has been a cooperative effort which has been sustained by enthusiasm, optimism, and great persistence. A small planning grant from the now defunct Community Services Administration in Washington allowed the operation of a small pilot for 50 students, and the development, writing and printing of an innovative curriculum of mini-units for use with groups of seventh to ninth graders outside the classroom. Proposals were submitted to FIPSE three years in a row; the third application was funded (for $70,259), and Project Discovery began operating the College Option Orientation Program, with a staff of three, in October 1983. Virginia's Deputy Secretary of Education spoke at the kickoff celebration, and the City of Roanoke declared December 15, 1983, "Project Discovery Day." We had high hopes!

Our March 1983 FIPSE proposal said that after three years Project Discovery would have demonstrated:

> ...through a partnership of a small liberal arts college, a community action agency, and local school system that students from poverty-level homes who lack support for postsecondary options in their home environment can be successfully encouraged to examine these opportunities; and that a concerted effort in assisting disadvantaged and minority students to learn about college will expand their opportunities to pursue education, will help colleges meet recruitment goals, and will give the target group of students exposure to schools outside the immediate geographic area.

We also said that one goal was to create a program that could be supported after FIPSE funding ended.

Our high hopes have been realized. Project Discovery participants are in college already, or are planning to go to college; they added math, science, and foreign languages to their high school course schedules. They used the Guidance Information System computers to help find the best college match for their interests and individual needs. They applied for and got financial aid, and their parents learned a lot about college too. Project Discovery made a difference for the students who enrolled in Roanoke, Virginia.

Project Discovery is proving to be not only innovative and cost-effective, but replicable as well. It is a program which sells itself.

The most crucial hurdle was educating key people about the need for such a program, and then about how Project Discovery could meet that need. The contacts of Cabell Brand, Chairman of TAP, the community action agency which began the program, were invaluable. From the outset "show and tell" programs were made, including showcasing participants, to garner the support of: VA Secretary of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chairman of State Board of Education, VA Office on Youth, VA NAACP, VA Dept. of Social Services, local school superintendents, community action agencies in Virginia and across the country, prominent citizens, and state legislators.

Chronology

1978 - Program initiative began by Cabell Brand, President of Board of Total Action Against Poverty (TAP).

1979 - TAP staff work with Roanoke College to develop Project Discovery, College Option Orientation Program.

1980 - Community Services Administration funds initial planning grant of $50,000 for start-up costs to fund 50 student pilot program, assist in developing the program, look for additional funds, and develop the junior high curriculum. Pilot is operated in Roanoke City Schools by Roanoke College.

1981 - Application submitted by Roanoke College for grant through U. S. Department of Education's Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). Grant is not funded.

1982 - Second final grant application to FIPSE, for junior high program only, is not funded.

1983 - Third application to FIPSE is funded; 3 year FIPSE grant to TAP to implement College Option Orientation Program for 200 high school students per year.

1983 - 84

- Serve 194 students - 87% are minority students and 77% are first generation college students.

1984 - Students visit 15 colleges for workshops and campus tours. Program becomes a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) fee waiver agency.

- Efforts to expand the program statewide are started with presentation at VACAA (Virginia Association of Community Action Agencies), November.

- 82% of Community Action Agencies invited to participate express interest in starting a program.

1985 - Project Discovery is incorporated and Board of Directors formed.

- Cabell Brand introduces Project Discovery to Virginia Board of Education, which passes resolution of support, January.

- Governor Robb puts $630,000 in his budget for the expansion of the Roanoke program into the Junior High Schools, surrounding localities, and for the statewide expansion. (Funding denied by legislators.)

- Follow-up conducted on seniors, who were juniors during the first year of operation: over 50% were accepted into colleges and paraprofessional programs (such as LPN) and will receive financial aid.

- Senior High Workshop Curriculum developed and printed for distribution.

- Monticello Area Community Action Agency in Charlottesville begins a small program in the summer of 1985, using an existing staff member part of the time and a work-study student from the University of Virginia, and contributions from the Episcopal Church and the Summer Youth Employment Program, the Junior League, and $7,754 in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

- PEOPLE, Inc. in Abingdon starts a one-year program with $42,000 from JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) to work with participants in that part of Appalachia.

- The Alexandria Office of Economic Opportunity frees up some funds by not replacing an employee, and a staff member volunteers time after work to start a small pilot program.

- The Richmond Community Action Program, Central Piedmont Action Council in Cumberland, and Newport News Office of Human Affairs lay the groundwork to start a summer program.

- Inquiries are made about the possibility of starting programs in Shreveport, Louisiana; St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; Pittsboro, North Carolina; Quincy, Illinois; and St. Petersburg, Florida.

- Valerie Rasheed is hired as Project Discovery, Inc. Executive Director.

- Postsecondary institutions which have hosted Project Discovery now include:

Duke University
Ferrum College
George Mason U.
Georgetown U.
Hampton U.
Hollins College
Howard U.
James Madison U.
U. of NC at Greensboro
Livingstone College
Longwood College
Lynchburg College
Norfolk State U.
North Carolina A&T
Radford U.
Randolph Macon College
Sweet Briar College
Univ. of Virginia
VA Commonwealth U.
VA State Univ.
VA Tech
VA Union U.
VA Western Comm Coll.
Wake Forest U.
Washington & Lee U
Winston-Salem U.

1986 - The General Assembly appropriates $277,000 for the statewide expansion of the program to operate in Roanoke, Richmond, Hampton, Norfolk, Abingdon, Alexandria and Charlottesville.

- Jeannie Baliles, wife of Governor Gerald Baliles, becomes honorary chairperson for Virginia, and hosts a luncheon at the Executive Mansion in August for 87 Project Discovery students.

- Cumberland and Tazewell receive money from JTPA to implement Project Discovery in their areas. The CAP in Alexandria is receiving funds from the City of Alexandria Community Development Block Grant Fund.

- Basketball Star Ralph Sampson agrees to be National Chairperson for Project Discovery.

- Presentation made at National Association of Community Action Agencies directors' meeting in Miami, October.

- Inquiries have been made about the possibility of having a Project Discovery program in Texas, Ohio, Hawaii, South Carolina, Maryland and New York.

- Virginia Department of Education completes study of program and recommends expansion of program in Virginia, December.

- Proposal submitted to Pepsico Foundation for national dissemination of Project Discovery, November.

D. Project Description

TAP's Project Discovery program began operating October 1, 1983 with the hiring of a Manager, Youth Coordinator and Secretary, and the goal of working with 200 students per year, tenth and eleventh graders in the two Roanoke City high schools. Initially the program enrollment was in three month cycles, but this was phased out when it became clear that students often couldn't complete the program by attending all the workshops in that time frame. We were in effect giving them another chance to fail at something. Now students are enrolled all year. Also initially the workshops were held after school; students were tired then, and hungry, and hence absenteeism was high. We later changed to primarily Saturday and overnight trips, which were also much more fun for the young people. Transportation was easier this way, and it didn't interfere with after school activities or jobs.

The program involves a great deal of coordination, first with the students and their schedules and transportation needs, secondly with the school system for assistance with recruitment and access to the schools where the students can be contacted, and thirdly with the colleges to be visited. A fourth element is parent involvement; much correspondence goes to parents: a newsletter, invitations to go on the trips, required forms, etc. This fourth year we are requiring parents to meet with staff in person, if at all possible, when enrolling their children.

Project Discovery is a comprehensive effort to work with students and their parents, utilizing the resources of the public school system and colleges and universities to assist them to think "College", to prepare for and take advantage of a higher education. It involves the students in a series of seminars, campus visits, career and college exploration through computers, and cultural enrichment activities.

Goal

The goal of Project Discovery is to help minority and low-income students, grades 6-12, prepare themselves to gain access to postsecondary education.

This goal is accomplished by helping students:

- Set goals for themselves
- Take appropriate college preparatory courses.
- Increase self-esteem.
- Become the first in their family to go to college.
- Obtain early exposure to the college environment through campus visits.

- Become acquainted with the various types of financial aid available to them.
- Improve their academic performance.
- Increase their cultural experiences.
- Increase their capability of going to college through educating their parents about the college process and financial aid.

Recruitment and Selection of Students. All students who participate in Project Discovery do so voluntarily and with parental consent.

Students learn of Project Discovery through direct recruitment in the classroom. Project Discovery staff tell students what Project Discovery can offer them, show them a video tape "It's Your Choice" and provide the students with a program brochure which has a postage paid perforated application attached. The video is distributed by the Virginia Department of Education and depicts junior high school students exploring college as an option.

The students are asked to return the application to us by mail or to the school counselor. After the application has been received, the students and parents are asked to come to the office for an interview. The interview allows the staff person to tell the student and parent what the program provides and what is expected of the participant. Also, during the interview a student's seriousness about becoming involved in Project Discovery can be assessed. In addition to direct recruitment, student referrals are received from school counselors, teachers, and principals. The belief that every person has untapped potential is the basis for the development of Project Discovery.

Therefore, a student's success or lack of success in achieving grades or test scores is not a determining factor in the selection

process.

Students involved in Project Discovery are selected on the basis that they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Within 100-200% of the Health and Human Services Poverty Income Guidelines (currently, $11,000 - $22,000 for a family of 4)
- First generation college student.
- Receive free or reduced lunch and books.

To combat the myth that students from homes with high incomes have the parental support and information needed to go to college, 20% of the total number of students enrolled in the program can be over the income guidelines and still participate in Project Discovery.

Senior high students grades 9-12 meet in groups, some of which are experiential workshops, to learn about the college option and how to see themselves in the college setting. If students don't know what they want or need to know when they enter the program, they will know at the conclusion. They will be able to answer questions such as: "What are the basic college preparatory courses?", "What if I haven't taken any of these?", "What is a major?", "What kind of school will be best for me?", "What should I look for in a college?"

Activities are conducted mostly on the weekends and after school; each high school student visits three to seven college campuses in and out of the state. The students participate in seminars and workshops on the following topics, which are outlined in the Senior High Curriculum:

1. <u>Goal Setting/Life Planning Workshop</u>

   Goals: -To explore realistic short and long term goals.
   -To develop realistic objectives under each goal.
   -To review our past individually by doing a lifeline.

2. Study Skills Workshop

Goals: -To provide the students with an overview of study habits and time management.

-To reinforce the importance of good study skills in attaining their educational goals.

-To provide the students with a handout that they can refer to later about study skills and time management.

3. Admissions Workshop

Goals: -To provide students with information on the entire admissions procedure.

-To familiarize the students with the types of college entrance examinations and the importance of taking the appropriate college preparatory courses, and to let them know what the courses are.

-To provide the students with knowledge about documents they will need to furnish during the application process.

-To provide the students with the knowledge that some postsecondary institutions require admission interviews and how to conduct themselves in an interview.

4. Financial Aid Workshop

Goals: -Introduce the students to the general application procedures involved with student financial aid and the Financial Aid Form.

-To develop an understanding that college enrollment can be accessible in spite of costs.

-To develop an understanding that assistance may be available in various forms (grants, loans, etc.) and types (merit, need), and to develop an understanding of those forms and types.

5. Choosing a College/College Life Workshop

Goals: -To provide the students with factors to be considered with choosing a college.

-To develop an understanding of the importance of visiting a college before making a final decision to attend.

-To provide the students with the opportunity to interact and talk with college students.

-To provide the students with an overview of what college life entails.

-To develop an understanding that one is independent as a college student, which requires time management and self-discipline.

In addition to the workshops, Project Discovery students:

- Receive academic support counseling (types of courses needed to gain access to college).
- Attend cultural enrichment activities (lectures, plays, dinners, operas, etc).
- Receive tutoring in Algebra I, II, and Geometry as needed.
- Attend a student completion banquet where they receive a certificate of completion, membership card, and two college coping books. The banquet gives the students a sense of accomplishment and allows parents to share that moment with them.

Program staff conduct the Goal Setting/Life Planning Workshop, while the others are done by college and university admissions and other personnel. While naturally the workshop varies with the person and the institutions, we have consistently received very positive evaluations by the students, who are asked to fill out a form immediately after each workshop, rating how the workshop met its goals.

Campus Involvement: Students visit various college campuses, which gives them the opportunity to compare large, medium, and small colleges to one another.

While on campus students experience what it is like to live in a dormitory, eat in the student cafeteria, attend campus activities, interact with college students and faculty.

Parent and Community Involvement. Workshops are held to inform parents about the college process and financial aid. Parents are encouraged to become more involved with their child's education. Parents are also invited to attend the Project Discovery student completion banquet.

Community involvement is an important part of the program. Through the involvement of parents, many members of the community learned of Project Discovery and have assisted staff in identifying interested students. The broader community has also been involved in Project Discovery Advisory Boards or Task Forces, which include representatives of school systems, school boards, city officials, Chambers of Commerce, churches, colleges and universities, local advocacy groups, sororities, fraternities, etc.

Follow-up. All students after completing their first year of the program will be contacted at various times yearly for: follow-up activities, workshops, trips, review of grades, and filling out college aplications. Meetings with guidance counselors to follow up on grades, attendance, course selection, and attitudes are held. Students are contacted by phone, in person, and at school or home. After the students have entered college, follow-up is conducted. The admissions offices are contacted to ascertain student progress.

To date, 120 students who completed the Project Discovery progam in Virginia are now attending college.

1. Computer Match-up - Students explore careers and match up their educational interest with college through the GIS system.

2. SAT Fee Waivers - the 11th grade students meeting the income guidelines of the program are given fee waivers to take the SAT exam free of charge. The charge for the test is $12.00.

3. Application Fee Waivers - Seniors receive three college application fee waivers, which allows them to apply to a variety of colleges without having to worry about the cost, and not limit themselves to applying to just one college because of cost.

4. College Credit for Participants - Arrangements are currently being made wherein all Project Discovery participants completing the program will receive a college credit through the community college system.

E. Project Results

As a result of our FIPSE project, we have been able to successfully disseminate our program, so that high school students across Virginia are now benefiting from what we learned in Roanoke, Some of the results include:

A. Successful implementation of partnership. Project Discovery depends on the close cooperation of many entities: community action agencies, State Dept. of Education, local school systems - superintendent, counselors, teachers, Community Advisory Boards, public and private colleges and universities, 2-year and 4-year private sector supporters, parents and students. That this endeavor has been successful, and has been replicated, is a testament to the commitment of all concerned to address an urgent problem.

B. Individualized approach works. Project Discovery staff are concerned and caring, and help students want to achieve and build a better future. Of the 737 students who participated (in all sites) during the period July 1, 1979 through June 30, 1986, only two dropped out of school - one for pregnancy, one for criminal detention. Students set goals, improve their grades and add college prep courses.

C. Commission on Excellence. In October 1986, the Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education submitted their report, "Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future." In this they decry the "dramatic disparity" which exists among Virginia's schools. As one way to reduce the effect of this disparity, which takes various forms, they recommend "State support for programs to reduce the performance gap between black and white students and for special college preparation programs for minority students by July 1, 1988."

D. Replication. Project Discovery has proven replicable: the program which started in Roanoke in October 1983, is now operating in both larger metropolitan and rural areas. Programs funded by the Commonwealth are in Roanoke, Charlottesville, Abingdon, Alexandria, Norfolk, Hampton, Richmond; in addition, there are programs in Tazewell and Cumberland, plus one in Quincy, Illinois.

E. Institutionalization. The Commonwealth of Virginia is funding pilot projects throughout the State, a brand-new approach to program implementation for the Department of Education.

School Year	Drop-out Rate
1979-80	8.4%
1980-81	9.1%
1981-82	6.9%
1982-83	4.2%
1983-84	4.6%
1984-85	5.2%

Pre-College Preparation and Selection - More than half (60%) of Project Discovery students stated that they added one or two college preparatory courses as a result of being in the program, while over a fourth (26%) have added or indicated they intend to add a mathematics/algebra course. In a follow-up survey in 1984, almost fifty percent (50%) of the eleventh grade students in the Roanoke City program during 1983-84 indicated they had taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test and been accepted into college. These results are particularly significant considering the fact that these were students who would not oridinarily have considered college to be an option for themselves. Additionally, their participation occurred in the first year of Project Discovery's operation, a time when the program might not have been expected to have as great an impact as it would in successive years.

Project Discovery has been credited with influencing students' college choices as well as their choice of study. More than half (51%) of the students intending to attend college cited Project Discovery as an influence in their major field of study. For example, 49% of the 1985 graduating seniors who participated in Project Discovery in Roanoke City went on to college. For 1986 graduates in Roanoke City, 44% of the Project Discovery graduates went to college. Nearly one-third (29%) indicated their selection of a college resulted from Project Discovery campus visits.

Visits to college campuses and workshops on topics related to college attendance (study skills, financial aid, choosing a college, goal setting) encourage student interest in postsecondary education. During a two-year period being evaluated, the majority of students (69.6%) attended six or seven workshops and visited between four and six different college campuses. Most students (94.4%) considered the campus visitations as valuable experiences.

Seniors who have been accepted into college/university have attributed their selection of a college/university to Project Discovery campus visits (29%).

Evaluation and Student Follow-up

Student evaluations of staff and workshops were impressively high. An overwhelming percentage (98%) of students participating in Project Discovery felt they received much specialized, individualized attention by the staff and would recommend the program to a friend. Nearly all (99%) gave the staff a high or above average rating.

A large percentage (87%) of students stated the workshops were very informational and presented in an understandable manner. Nearly the same percentage (86%) perceived them to be valuable experiences. In particular, students found the financial aid workshop to be helpful.

Follow-up occurs for students who are still enrolled in high school and for former students who have entered college. Project staff conduct meetings with guidance counselors and other school personnel to determine student grades, attendance record, course selections, and general behavior in school. Staff also contact the admission offices of the colleges to reinforce student attendance and academic progress. When possible, students and their parents are contacted directly to ascertain how students are doing.

Parent and Community Involvement

The critical involvement of community action agencies has been an important part of the success of Project Discovery. Their special concerns for and expertise with minority and low-income populations, their ability to assess community resources and support, and their past involvement with both traditional and non-traditional educational programs make them an assertive and effective base for Project Discovery. In addition, their ability to share resources and technical assistance through the statewide network, Project Discovery, Incorporated, assists in the rapid dissemination and replication of the Project.

Community involvement is an integral part of the program. As a result of the involvement of parents, many members of the community have learned of Project Discovery and have assisted project staff in identifying interested students. Community representatives serve as members of Project Discovery Advisory Boards or Task Forces, including representatives of school

systems, school boards, city officials, chamber of commerce, churches, colleges and universities, local advocacy groups, sororities, and fraternities. Several corporations and church groups in the various project localities have given donations to support the various programs. In addition, workshops are conducted specifically with parent groups to discuss the college preparation process and present financial aid information.

Postsecondary Education. Of the 183 Project Discovery students who were slated to have completed high school in 1985 and 1986, we have follow-up data on only 76%. This follow-up reveals that more than three-fifths (61%) are attending a postsecondary education institution. (See appendix). Fourteen percent entered military service; many students are attracted to the service for the opportunities to further their education without financial worries.

Evaluation. TAP contracted with an outside program evaluator, who worked with us to develop questionnaires to determine students' and parents' pre and post-program participation attitudes and learnings. Data was also tabulated on workshop attendance, demographics etc. From the beginning, the evaluation methods and results were a problem. We were so frustrated that we did not utilize the third party evaluator during the third program year.

The problems began with difficulty getting the parents to fill out and return the questionnaires; early on we discovered that the original form needed to be revamped and simplified. We found that some parents were illiterate or otherwise unable to cooperate, and that in fact, some of the students had filled in the forms for their parents. Throughout the program it was difficult to get forms completed. Transferring the data to op-scan sheets was a major time-consuming task for the secretary, as were the ongoing efforts needed

to try to get the forms returned to the office. Every conceivable approach was tried, including asking for information over the telephone in the evenings.

The appendix includes a summary evaluation report culled from the evaluator's longer report. With hindsight, we would have been better served to have had a more interactive, hands-on evaluation process, with the evaluator actually meeting students and parents, and observing the workshops and campus trips. What we instead had to deal with was a great deal of data which was compiled on computer and analyzed in a vacuum. There was no room made for subjective or process issues, and all the results were presented in a rather cumbersome form.

Follow-up. Because the Project Discovery students are in a funnel situation, obtaining information on the ultimate outcome - what they do after high school - has been a major problem. The first graduating class was 1985; there were 56 students who had participated in Project Discovery since 1983 who should have been graduating in 1985. Staff worked with most of them as sophomores in 1983-84. With a small staff - manager, youth coordinator and secretary - working with 200 students each year, the onus of having to maintain contact with all students who participated in previous years is great. Some students do come back, keep the staff informed of their plans, ask for help with college admissions, or for letters of reference. Some students come back from college to thank the staff for their help, and to report on their progress. Program staff use every opportunity to collect information on former Project Discovery students, including quizzing them when they see them in the community.

Follow-up will continue to be a problem. The high schools in Roanoke at this time do not have good records of students. They can give us only the lists of graduating students, not which students applied or are planning to attend college, military, etc. Again we come up against the problem of the student-counselor ratio being 1 to 435. If students move out of the City to the County, there are five possible high schools they might attend; school records are not centralized. Many adults are lax about filling out forms and mailing information requested, teenagers more so. Numerous mailings with self-addressed postage-paid envelopes go out. Numerous phone calls are made. Present students are asked to check up on former students. But the bottom line is that it is very difficult to be able to provide answers about what Project Discovery students do after high school completion.

Delayed Admission. We have found that some students who are still "considering" going to college at the end of their senior year do indeed go on, but after a year at home working. Others go to work right away with a definite plan to enter a particular college after one year of working to save money. Only a longitudinal study of all participants would include these college-going stories in outcome data. Another factor is that each year there are students who for whatever reason do not graduate with their class, but return to high school the following fall. Also, we have students who come back to the staff asking help to apply to a baccalaurate program after completing a training program; recently a young woman who had gotten an LPN certificate decided she wanted the R.N. and a B.A.

Completing the Program. Students are considered to have "completed' the Project Discovery program when they have attended the required series of six workshops. They are then invited with their parents to a "completion banquet", presented with a certificate, a book about college coping, and a Project Discovery membership card. There is always an inspirational motivational speaker at the banquets, and everyone enjoys the feeling of accomplishment and cameraderie, However, we are seeing that students who have enrolled in Project Discovery, but who have not completed the entire program are nonetheless applying to and enrolling in colleges. Following the practice of private colleges, we consider these students too to be "alumni" and do follow-up on them.

F. Summary and Conclusions

We are pleased with Project Discovery's excellent track record which has led to a statewide dissemination and the enthusiastic support of educators, legislators, and child advocates. Hurdles which have been overcome include managing the Statewide expansion and the local program at the same time, with limited resources; persuading colleges and universities to offer workshops on Saturdays and weekends, and to welcome non-seniors to the campus; and gaining the trust and cooperation of counselors and faculty in the school system.

A few points are worth stressing. First, that the program succeeds partly because of caring staff who act as good role models and offer encouragement, helping students one by one. Second, that the community based program operating outside the school system gives more flexibility and leverage, and can complement the efforts of teachers and counselors; it targets kids who don't come to the attention of school staff. Third, that parental support is as important as we always thought it would be, but that we had to require a meeting with the parent during the enrollment process in order to get them involved. This takes more staff time, but pays off.

In order to communicate some sense of the student participants and of the Project Discovery staff, I am including three case studies written by counselors. The first is from Charlottesville, the last two from a rural area in central Virginia.

JANE is a 17-year-old student at Albemarle High School and began Project Discovery last summer as part of the 1985 Summer Youth Employment Program. When she started she didn't know what she was going to do after AHS and had excluded college as a choice. She had perfect attendance in the program and became a spokesperson on a state level during a meeting with Senator Willey. Next year she will attend Virginia Commonwealth University as a Business Administration Major.

RYAN is an 18-year-old black male, a senior at Buckingham County High School, has been accepted to Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia. Ryan will be entering college in the fall. Ryan comes from a poverty stricken family of four. His father was killed in an automobile accident and his mother was left to rear four children. Ryan is the eldest of the four children and seems to take on the fatherly responsibilities to help in aiding his mother in rearing his brothers and sisters ...his mother has been ill for a number of years now and the only source of income now for the family is an ADC check, which is hardly enough for a family of four ...Ryan is of a strong religious background and works diligently within the church. He visits the elderly within the community, and helps each one that he possibly can...Ryan is a very intelligent young man who will succeed in whatever he does in life. Ryan is a very hard worker and he is dependable; for example, when Ryan could not make it to a workshop one afternoon, he sent a letter explaining his absence and made arrangements to get the material that he had missed. This is just an example of the type of exceptional individual that Ryan is. Through all of his ill fortunes, he manages to keep a bright smile on his face. Ryan displays a tremendous amount of persistence and assertiveness; that is what I feel has caused Ryan to succeed in Project Discovery.

EVELYN is a black female, 19-years-old, and is the middle aged of three daughters reared by a single parent mother. She has worked in a restaurant. She has been unsuccessful in our project because:

1. She did not attend 2 of 5 workshops
2. She did not take advantage of a field trip to Charlottesville
3. She did not get in touch with other students nor this staff after missing the meetings in above

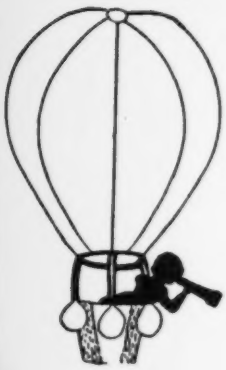
There seems to be a listlessness or complacent attitude about life in general. She did send word to us through a student attending the field trip that she stayed with a relative the night before and thusly did not have a suitable dress to wear. This would indicate poor prior planning and lack of organization. Her interpersonal skills are acceptable, she has a B-average in grades from Buckingham County High School, and her grooming is very good. She does lack drive and persistency. I believe she can be salvaged; however, exams and graduation must be accomplished first. We will contact her immediately after graduation and attempt to revitalize her participation in our project.

(30)

Valerie Rasheed was the first Project Discovery Manager, and now is Executive Director of Project Discovery, Inc., to her much of Project Discovery's rapid expansion is due. In a July 1986 report, she wrote.

> This study cannot really convey the impact that this program has had on the lives of the many students it has touched. Only by working with the students first hand can one attest to the true value of Project Discovery.
>
> The encouragement and support given to students where there is none in the home environment, the access given to needed information, the linkages between school and parent and student and the campus visits, all are immeasurable.
>
> Without Project Discovery, the number of students falling through the cracks of the educational system will continue to increase. Project Discovery can assist the State in increasing the number of minority and low-income students entering and graduating from college.

That is a statement of faith and hope--two qualities which have sustained all of us at Total Action Against Poverty as we have persevered in transforming our dream of helping youths get to college into a gratifying reality.



PROJECT DISCOVERY

. . . Leading to horizons unlimited.

"In a society in which knowledge is a source of wealth, deprivation of access to higher education is a form of bondage."

-- "To Secure the Blessings of Liberty," American Association of State Colleges and Universities, November, 1986

PROJECT DISCOVERY...

Leading To Horizons Unlimited.

Creating A Brighter Future.

Project Discovery can change the course of a student's life. These students illustrate the profound influence that Project Discovery can have.

When Dwayne was young, his father was killed in a car accident. His mother worked to support him and his three younger brothers until she became too ill. The family's only source of income became an ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) check which was hardly enough for a family of five. Dwayne took a job managing a bookstore to help support his family. An intelligent and hardworking young man, he deserved the chance to succeed in life. During his junior year Dwayne participated in Project Discovery. "I thought I couldn't go to college because we didn't have enough money," explains Dwayne. "Through Project Discovery I learned that I was qualified for financial aid." Dwayne applied and was accepted at Virginia State University.

As a child Sandra was neglected by her parents. At the age of eight she was removed from her home and placed in the care of foster parents. As a high school student, she attempted suicide twice. She failed her junior year and was close to dropping out of school when she enrolled in Project Discovery. After participating in the program she became serious about her schoolwork and improved her grades. She wanted to go to college. "The Project Discovery staff and the other participants served as a support system for me. They helped me realize my ability. Now I am definitely planning on going to college," attests Sandra.

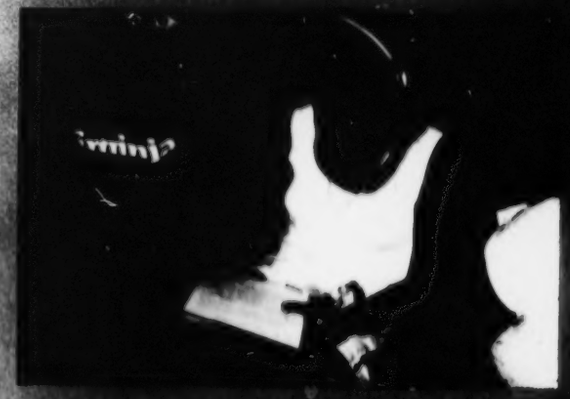
Investing In Virginia.

Project Discovery is a cost-effective solution to a legacy of limitations for disadvantaged youth. The program provides equal opportunity and assists students who might otherwise not know how to take advantage of the benefits and opportunities of a good education.

This valuable experience costs $350 per student, but is offered free of charge to those eligible. Project Discovery needs to supplement funds from the Virginia Department of Education and other grant sources by appealing to the private sector for tax-deductible contributions.

Support from business and industry is an investment in Virginia's future. And education is always a good investment!

Your contribution can help Project Discovery influence the futures of many more young people. Those who help Project Discovery succeed today will see the benefits for years to come. Make an investment in the future, today.



Project Discovery is an innovative youth program that gives low-income and minority students in grades 6 to 12 a chance for a better life, by exposing them to options after high school. As a result, kids who never pictured themselves going to college learn that it is possible. They see how a college degree can lead to satisfying careers and good paying jobs.

Project Discovery answers a critical need to increase minority access to postsecondary education, and to stem the tide of dropouts.

Governor's Mansion
Richmond, VA
August, 1986

Total Action Against Poverty, Inc.

Demographic Information
579 Project Discovery Participants
Roanoke City Public Schools
1983-1986

SEX: 68% Female
32% Male

RACE: 74% Black
24% White
2% Other

AGE AT PROGRAM ENTRANCE:

36% - age 15
26% - 16
22% - 14
8% - 17
6% - 13
1% - 18
1% - 12

GRADE LEVEL:

10th - 55%
11th - 21%
9th - 17%
8th - 6%

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE: 64%

Follow-up on TAP Project Discovery Participants
High School Classes Graduating 1985 and 1986

	1985	1986	Total
No. Students	56	127	183
Follow-up Available	37 (61%)	102 (80%)	137 (76%)

Based on Available data, students now are:

Attending post secondary institution	31 (89%)	52 (51%)	83 (61%)
Military Service	5 (14%)	14 (15%)	19 (14%)

March, 1987

TAP PROJECT DISCOVERY

Follow-up information on student participants

High School Senior Class of 1986

Total = 127

52	Accepted to College (43 known to attend)	41%
25	No outcome information available	20%
24	Employed*	19%
14	Military Service	11%
8	High School, 1986-87	6%
4	Unemployed	3%
		100%

*Two plan to attend College Fall of '87

Follow-up information on student participants for whom outcome is known and who graduated from high school

Total = 94

52	Accepted to College	55%
14	Military Service	15%
24	Employed	26%
4	Unemployed	4%
		100%

Types of Postsecondary Institutions Attended

	Public	Private	T	%
4-year	20	7	27	62%
2-year	8	0	8	19%
Trade/other*	0	8	8	19%
				100%

* Fashion; Beautician: Computer: Business

Postsecondary Institutions Attended by Project Discovery "Graduates" Class of 1986

Virginia State University
Virginia Western Community College
Ferrum College
Virginia Tech
Radford University
Winston Salem State University
University of Houston
Howard University
James Madison University
University of Virginia
Hampton University
Norfolk State University
East Tennessee State University
University of Tennessee
North Carolina Central
West Point
Saint Paul University
Randolph Macon Women's College
George Mason University
Pennsylvania State University

Projected Majors of Project Discovery "Graduates" Class of 1986

Early Childhood Education
Mass Communications
History
Apparel Design
Pre-Law
Economics/Accounting
Engineering
Business Administration
Computer Science
Office Technology

March, 1987

Dear Mrs. Rasheed

I hope this letter finds you well. I also hope that project discovery is making toward another successful year.

Mrs. Perry I couldn't talk with you before I left but my time ran out. I am adjusting slowly to this new lifestyle. I'm doing fine as far as my social adjustment goes, but the academic responsibilities are tough.

I want you to know that I wish I knew more people like you, that <u>care</u>. If ever you come up to James Madison with a group of students, please feel free to call on me for anything.

My address is:
P.O. Box 5352
James Madison Univ.
Harrisonburg, Va. 22807
(703) 433-4560

again if you need any thing please let me know.

Sincerely yours,
Paige Patterson.

THE EXECUTIVE MANSION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

May 19, 1986

Ms. Valerie Rasheed
Project Discovery
P. O. Box 2868
Richmond, Virginia 24001

Dear Ms. Rasheed:

I am delighted to accept your invitation to serve as honorary chairman for Project Discovery. It is quite an honor to have been chosen to participate in your program.

Please get in touch with us about dates for any events you are planning.

With sincere best wishes, I am

Very truly yours,

Jeannie P. Baliles

Jeannie P. Baliles

JPB/sb

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor
Richmond 23219

Gerald L. Baliles
Governor

June 17, 1986

Ms. Valerie Rasheed
Project Discovery, Inc.
TAP
Post Office Box 2868
Roanoke, Virginia 24001-2868

Dear Ms. Rasheed:

I am pleased to write in support of Project Discovery, Inc. and its important efforts to encourage and prepare minority and low-income students to participate in post-secondary education. I, myself, am a first generation college student and I share Project Discovery's concern that opportunities for higher education continue to expand.

You have my very best wishes for the success of Project Discovery.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Gerald L. Baliles

GLB:so

OFFICE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS

CONTRACTOR'S CORNER

Volume 3 | November 28, 1986 | Number 11

STUDENTS CHALLENGED BY SENATOR ANDREWS

By DENNIS G. LEE

Approximately 200 Project Discovery participants received a challenge and an offer from State Senator Hunter B. Andrews of Hampton at ceremonies on November 3 at Hampton High School auditorium.

Andrews challenged the group not to flunk the course of life. "Living in this country you can do whatever you want, within the confines of the law. If you don't take advantage of this opportunity you will flunk the course of life."

The Hampton State Senator offered his support to Project Discovery participants when he said, "I want to motivate your motors and I don't want you to become grate people. If you do not take advantage of this program some of you could become grate people."

EXPLANATION

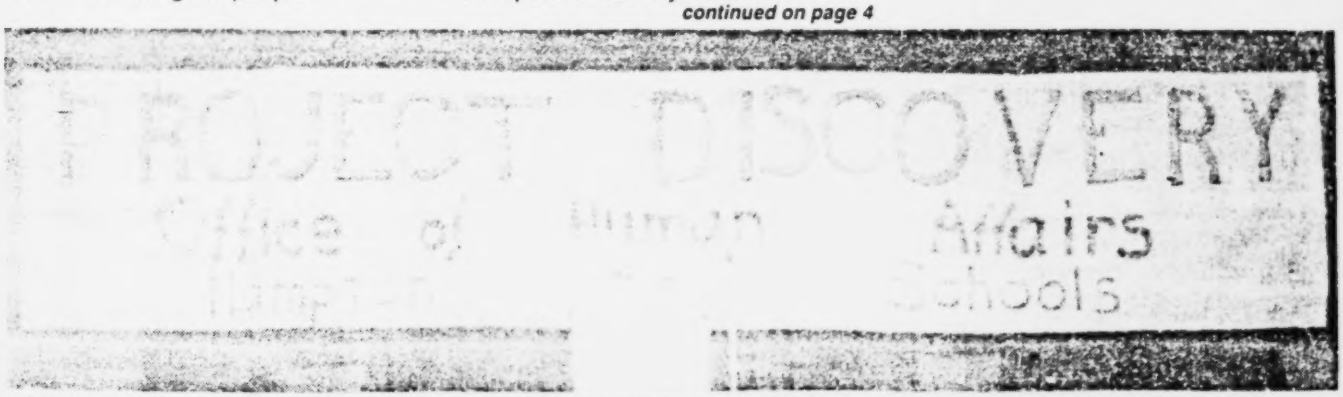
At this point the students seemed slightly confused until Andrews went on to explain that the grate people he referred to were those who sat over gratings in large cities because this is where the warm air is in the winter.

Project Discovery is a program in progress in Hampton and other Virginian communities and is geared to "...assist students in reaching a higher level of personal motivation and to provide vital information about how to set and achieve educational goals."

Students from Hampton High School and Lindsay C. Alton Middle School, sites of the local program, were joined by students from schools in Norfolk and Richmond for the ceremony and were welcomed by R. Lowell Thomas, Principal of Hampton High School and by Dr. Don Musselman, Superintendent of the Hampton School System.

continued on page 4

GUEST SPEAKER . . . State Senator Hunter B. Andrews of Hampton was the guest speaker at the Project Discovery Challenge Ceremony and challenged participants "Not to flunk the course of life."



A BANNER DAY . . . Participants of Project Discovery had their day of recognition when they gathered at Hampton High School auditorium for "Challenge Ceremony" and heard State Senator Hunter B. Andrews of Hampton extend a challenge and an offer to them. Approximately 200 students enrolled in the program from Hampton, Norfolk and Richmond met in the auditorium after a day of touring Hampton University, where they viewed campus life and received counselling on what it takes to get into college and what assistance they may expect including financial aid.

continued from page 1

DELEGATES

Representing the other house of the General Assembly were Delegates W. Henry Maxwell of Newport News and Mary T. Christian of Hampton. Other participating in the ceremonies were Dr. Don S. Ayers, Supervisor of Secondary School Guidance for the Virginia Department of Education, and Ms. Valerie Rashed, Executive Directory of Project Discovery for Virginia.

Project Discovery staff, recognizing Senator Andrews' contributions, presented him with a plaque, certificate, pin and Project Discovery T-shirt. Daryl Williams, a Project Discovery Summer program participant, made the T-shirt presentation while Ms. Rasheed gave the Senator the other momentoes.

Williams, who also spoke to the group, told of last Summer's program which included a luncheon at the Governor's Mansion, hosted by Mrs. Baliles, a visit to Virginia Commonwealth University and attendance at a play.

Rasheed gave an overview of Project Discovery and lauded the support for the program statewide, and especially in Hampton. The Hampton program is operated by the Office of Human Affairs and the Hampton School System.

PARENTS SUPPORT

Rasheed urged parents to "Stick with the students" on this project. "Senior high school students, and significantly their parents, are exposed to such topics (in workshops and seminars) as Goal Setting/Life Planning; Study Skills/Test Taking; Choosing a College/College Life; and Financial Aid", according to information provided by the Project Discovery staff.

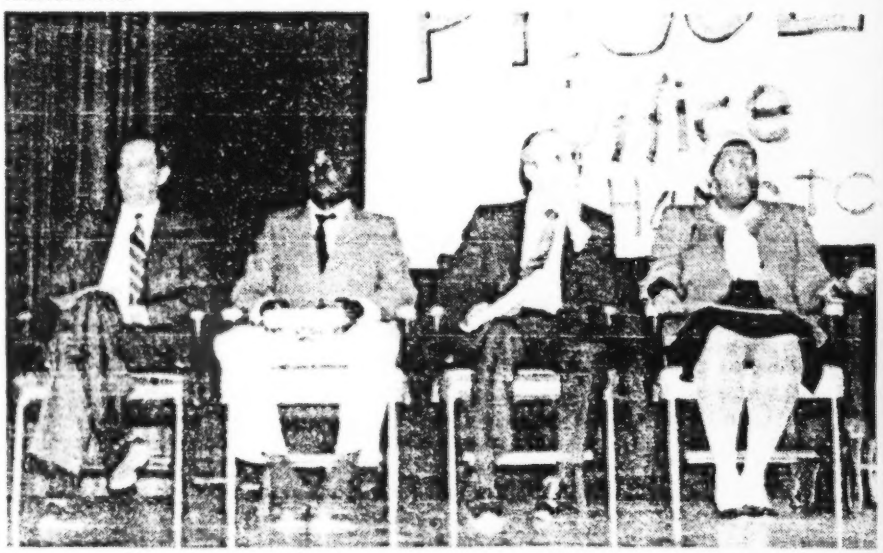
A total of 75 students are participating in the Hampton program with 35 enrolled from Hampton High and 40 from Lindsay C. Alton Middle School.

Carolyn C. Hutcheson, Office of Human Affairs, Executive Officer, noted that, "The budget for the program is just $30,000 and runs from July 1, 1986 to June 30, 1987. This money covers the cost of counsellor-instructor, student activities, such as field trips, materials for student projects and administration."

COLLEGE TOURS

The program exposes students to college life through field trips and encourages them to enroll in college preparatory courses. Prior to the November 3 ceremonies the participants were taken on a tour of Hampton University where they were briefed by various department heads on campus life.

It is hoped that the program will give students a better understanding and feel for the project's motto. "Leading to horizons unlimited."



AWARDS AND SPEAKERS . . . Valerie Rasheed, State Executive Director for Project Discovery, presents a plaque to State Senator Hunter B. Andrews, for his support and contribution to the project aimed at motivating high school and middle school students towards college educations. Bottom photo, speakers who addressed the gathering are, left to right, R. Lowell Thomas, Hampton High School Principal; Daryl Williams, Summer Project Discovery participant; Dr. Don S. Ayers, Supervisor of Secondary School guidance for the Virginia Department of Education; and Rasheed.

CONTRACTOR'S CORNER

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ITEM 153 OF THE 1986-88 APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Education

November 1986

Executive Summary

Item 153 of the 1986-88 Appropriations Act

Project Discovery

1. Seven school divisions, in cooperation with Project Discovery staff, have contracted with local community agencies to implement a Project Discovery program. These school divisions are Abingdon, Alexandria, Charlottesville, Hampton, Norfolk, City of Richmond, and the City of Roanoke.

2. The Virginia General Assembly, during its 1986 session, appropriated $277,000 to fund one-half of the cost of the programs in these seven school divisions. Currently, 593 students are involved in projects in these seven school systems at an average cost of $467 per student.

3. By addressing the critical problems of the historical under-representation and declining enrollments of minority students in postsecondary education, Project Discovery focuses on reducing the number of high school dropouts and directs students into college preparatory work.

4. Each Project Discovery student

   participates in How to Study workshops;

   uses the computerized Guidance Information System (GIS) for college and career selection;

   learns about the college admissions process, including admission requirements;

   visits three to seven Virginia colleges and universities; and

   participates in mathematics, science, and foreign language courses in high school.

5. Parents of Project Discovery students participate in workshops devoted to the college admissions process including sources of financial aid.

6. Community representatives, such as school board members and city officials, and those from chambers of commerce, churches, colleges and universities, sororities, and fraternities are involved in Project Discovery programs.

7. Based on the results of the findings to date, the Superintendent of Public Instruction supports continuing the present programs. Upon examination of results over a longer period of time, additional expansion may be recommended.

RESPONSE TO ITEM NO. 153 OF THE 1986-88 APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Introduction

As of July 1, 1986, Project Discovery is being implemented in seven Virginia school divisions: Abingdon, Alexandria, Charlottesville, Hampton, Norfolk, City of Richmond, and the City of Roanoke. Project Discovery addresses the critical problems of historical under-representation of black students in postsecondary education, the declining enrollment of minority students in postsecondary education, and dropout prevention.

Program Description

During 1979, with a $50,000 grant from the Community Services Administration, a department of the federal division of Health and Human Services, Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) in Roanoke, Virginia developed a pilot Project Discovery program. The program addressed the problem of minority and low-income youngsters access to a college education. Participating students learned to set their sights on a college education, following the program motto, "leading to horizons unlimited."

The model began in the Roanoke City Schools and has been implemented in Charlottesville, Alexandria, Abingdon, and Richmond, and, beginning July 1, 1986, in Hampton and Norfolk. Prior to this date, funding for Project Discovery programs was provided primarily by community action agencies across the state. During its 1986 session, the Virginia General Assembly directed that

> The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall study the effectiveness of the Project Discovery program in terms of the reduction of high school dropout rates and the direction of students into college preparatory work which will enable them to succeed in higher education. The Superintendent's report shall address future expansion of Project Discovery based on the results of the study to be presented to the Chairman of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees by December 15, 1986.

In addition, the Assembly appropriated funds ($277,000) for one-half of the cost of the programs in the seven pilot localities.

As a Project Discovery participant, each student participates in a variety of career development activities. Workshops dealing with career planning and decision-making are provided. Also, all students participate in How to Study workshops; learn about the college admissions process, including information about sources of financial aid; utilize the Guidance Information System (GIS) for college and career selection; and visit three to seven Virginia colleges and universities. Each student receives a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) fee and college application waiver. In addition to these activities, all students attend cultural enrichment activities. These activities are held after school hours and on weekends. Parents are informed about them and are involved in many of the activities. Community action agency personnel, in cooperation with staffs of local school systems, colleges, and universities coordinate and conduct these various program activities.

Student Selection and Involvement

Students are identified and referred for participation in Project Discovery by guidance counselors, are directly recruited in classrooms, and/or are self-referred. Student participation is voluntary.

To participate, students must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. are in grades six through twelve;
2. are within 200% of federal poverty guidelines;
3. will be first generation college students; and/or
4. receive free or reduced lunch or books.

However, for the student enrollment to reflect more accurately the general population, at least ten percent of the participating students may not be required to fall within one or more of these guidelines.

Since the program began in 1979, a total of 737 students participated in Project Discovery for the period 1979 - June 10, 1986, as described in Table I, Column A. This period covers the time prior to state involvement in the program. Table I, Column B details the current numbers and school divisions where the state-funded pilot projects are being conducted.

Table I

Area	Column A Participants-- July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1986 (Cumulative)	Column B Participants-- July 1, 1986 - June 30, 1987
Roanoke	629 (37 junior high school)	185 (85 junior high school)
Charlottesville	59 (22 junior high school)	114 (36 junior high school)
Abingdon	22	55
Alexandria	27	75
Norfolk	--	14
Hampton	--	75 (35 junior high school)
City of Richmond	--	75
Total	737	593

In a recent survey conducted by Calvin D. Jamison of 750 black high school seniors in Virginia's public schools, 68% of the students responded they would be first-generation college students. These students represented all geographic areas of the Commonwealth ("Study of Influences on Educational Aspirations of Virginia's High School Minority Graduates," Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1986).

On a statewide basis, the services provided for both students and their parents cost an average of $467 per student in state funds.

Project Discovery Impact Upon the Dropout Problem and Pre-College Preparation and Attendance

In its legislation, the General Assembly specifically expressed an interest in learning about the impact of Project Discovery on the dropout problem and helping students prepare for college:

Drop-Outs - Of the 737 students who participated in Project Discovery during the period July 1, 1979 -June 30, 1986, two dropped out of school. One student became pregnant, and the other was involved in a crime which warranted detention. Of the 593 students currently in the program in the seven pilot areas, no student has dropped out. Project Discovery staff believe that a combination of positive factors contribute to the low dropout rate. Permeating all Project activities are attention by staff, support counseling services, and program activities which repeatedly emphasize the importance of the individual and demonstrate the possibilities of preparing for and entering postsecondary education. The motivational nature of this program, with its emphasis upon the individual student, results in a positive learning environment for students. Since 1979, the student drop-out rate for the City of Roanoke has been as follows:

School Year	Drop-out Rate
1979-80	8.4%
1980-81	9.1%
1981-82	6.9%
1982-83	4.2%
1983-84	4.6%
1984-85	5.2%

Pre-College Preparation and Selection - More than half (60%) of Project Discovery students stated that they added one or two college preparatory courses as a result of being in the program, while over a fourth (26%) have added or indicated they intend to add a mathematics/ algebra course. In a follow-up survey in 1984, almost fifty percent (50%) of the eleventh grade students in the Roanoke City program during 1983-84 indicated they had taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test and been accepted into college. These results are particularly significant considering the fact that these were students who would not ordinarily have considered college to be an option for themselves. Additionally their participation occurred in the first year of Project Discovery's operation, a time when the program might not have been expected to have as great an impact as it would in successive years.

Project Discovery has been credited with influencing students' college choices as well as their choice of study. More than half (51%) of the students intending to attend college cited Project Discovery as an influence in their major field of study. For example, 49% of the 1985 graduating seniors who participated in Project Discovery in Roanoke City went on to college. For 1986 graduates in Roanoke City, 44% of the Project Discovery graduates went to college. Nearly one-third (29%) indicated their selection of a college resulted from Project Discovery campus visits.

Visits to college campuses and workshops on topics related to college attendance (study skills, financial aid, choosing a college, goal setting) encourage student interest in postsecondary education. During a two-year period being evaluated, the majority of students (69.6%) attended six or seven workshops and visited between four and six different college campuses. Most students (94.4%) considered the campus visitations as valuable experiences. Seniors who have been accepted into college/university have attributed their selection of a college/university to Project Discovery campus visits (29%).

Evaluation and Student Follow-up

Student evaluations of staff and workshops were impressively high. An overwhelming percentage (98%) of students participating in Project Discovery felt they received much specialized, individualized attention by the staff and would recommend the program to a friend. Nearly all (99%) gave the staff a high or above average rating.

A large percentage (87%) of students stated the workshops were very informational and presented in an understandable manner. Nearly the same percentage (86%) perceived them to be valuable experiences. In particular, students found the financial aid workshop to be helpful.

Follow-up occurs for students who are still enrolled in high school and for former students who have entered college. Project staff conduct meetings with guidance counselors and other school personnel to determine student grades, attendance record, course selections, and general behavior in school. Staff also contact the admission offices of the colleges to reinforce student attendance and academic progress. When possible, students and their parents are contacted directly to ascertain how students are doing.

Parent and Community Involvement

The critical involvement of community action agencies has been an important part of the success of Project Discovery. Their special concerns for and expertise with minority and low-income populations, their ability to assess community resources and support, and their past involvement with both traditional and non-traditional educational programs make them an assertive and effective base for Project Discovery. In addition, their ability to share resources and technical assistance through the statewide network, Project Discovery, Incorporated, assists in the rapid dissemination and replication of the Project.

Community involvement is an integral part of the program. As a result of the involvement of parents, many members of the community have learned of Project Discovery and have assisted project staff in identifying interested students. Community representatives serve as members of Project Discovery Advisory Boards or Task Forces, including representatives of school systems, school boards, city officials, chamber of commerce, churches, colleges and universities, local advocacy groups, sororities, and fraternities. Several corporations and church groups in the various project localities have given donations to support the various programs. In addition, workshops are conducted specifically with parent groups to discuss the college preparation process and present financial aid information.

Recommendations

The Project Discovery program has been underway for only a short time in all pilot sites except in the City of Roanoke. Based on the results of this study, it appears that the program is helping to address the critical problems of historical underrepresentation and the declining enrollments of minority students in postsecondary education. By focusing on these two areas, the program also contributes to the reduction of the number of high school drop-outs and increases the number of students participating in college preparatory courses. Based on an examination of information available at this time and first-hand observations, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The administration of and direction for the various Project Discovery programs have been provided by the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in the past. It is recommended that the local school divisions begin to play a stronger role in the implementation of the program in the several localities. Specifically, there is a need for local public school personnel, in cooperation with CAA personnel, to be more involved in the identification and selection of students for the Project; to consult continuously with CAA staff regarding the progress of students enrolled in the Project; and to assist in the follow-through and follow-up of students participating in the Project.
2. It is recommended that the Virginia General Assembly continue funding one-half the cost of present Project Discovery programs at Abingdon, Alexandria, Charlottesville, Hampton, Norfolk, City of Richmond, and City of Roanoke, for 1987-88 (1986-87 appropriation for the programs is $277,000). Because the programs have been underway for such a

short period, expansion is not recommended at this time. However, if program expansion is determined for 1987-88, it is recommended that such expansion include three sites with high dropout rates:

Sites	Dropout Percentages	Number of Students Recommended
Petersburg	10.1%	50
Greensville	10.1%	50
Isle of Wight	7.5%	50

In addition, several school divisions have indicated an interest in the implementation of a Project Discovery program. These divisions are as follows:

Accomack/Northampton Counties
Arlington City
Cumberland County
Danville City
Fairfax County
Fauquier County
Franklin County
Halifax County
Petersburg City
Scott County
Williamsburg City

Sample Collation of Student Evaluation of Workshops

PROJECT DISCOVERY PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOP

Sites: Radford University; University of North Carolina at Greensboro; James Madison University; North Carolina A&T

Attendance: 74 students

Goals:

1. To provide the students with an overview of study habits and time management.

2. Reinforce the importance of good study skills in attaining their educational goals.

3. To provide the students with a handout that they can refer to later about study skills and time management.

* *

1. Were the goals for the workshop met?

   95% of the students said the goals were met.

2. What new information did you learn about Study Skills today?

   Take extra classes; the importance of studying; not to cram; school work comes first; use your time wisely; start study skill habits before college; you can study and be involved in extra-curricular activities with proper time management; high school and college study skills differ; note taking must be strengthened; new and different ways to study; the attention span for one subject is about 20 minutes; how to study efficiently.

3. Name something that you will do as a result of the Study Skills Workshop.

   Study more; work harder in school; study ahead of time instead of cramming; ask for help when needed; become enthusiastic and motiviated about studying; strengthen note taking and study skills; change studying environment; study differently; spend about 30 minutes on each subject; set up a study guide; SQ3% - scan questions, read, recite, review.

4. Please rate the workshop.

   98% of the students rated the workshop average, above average, or excellent.

PROJECT DISCOVERY PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

ADMISSIONS WORKSHOP

Sites: Wake Forest University; Virginia Tech; Roanoke College; Longwood College; University of Virginia

Attendance: 72 students

Goals:

1. To provide the students with information on the entire admissions procedure.

2. To familiarize the students with the types of college entrance examinations and the importance of these examinations.

3. To develop an understanding of the importance of taking the appropriate college preparatory courses and to let them know what the appropriate courses are.

4. To provide the students with the knowledge of the documents they will need to furnish during the application procedure.

5. To provide the students with the knowledge that some post-secondary institutions require admission interviews, whereas others may not and how to conduct themselves in an interview if it is required.

* *

1. Were the goals for the workshop met?

   100% of the students said the goals were met.

2. What new information did you learn about Admissions today?

   Tests needed to enter college; different types of colleges; different types of financial aid available; what colleges look for in a person; what information is required; colleges do not look at SAT scores alone; math and foreign language is needed; talk with guidance counselor; how to choose the right college; ask questions; understand the importance of taking the right college preparatory courses; colleges consider class rank, SAT scores, and performance; credits and classes needed to enter college; how to transfer from a community college; different types of career choices and opportunities; you can graduate with a minor as well as a major.

3. Name something that you will do as a result of the Admissions Workshop.

   Take preparatory college courses; get better grades in science and math; take the SAT; look into financial aid; look at subjects offered at different colleges; take the PSAT; look into financial aid early; apply to more than one college; send for application to different colleges; ask questions; get a copy of transcipt; find out class rank; apply early to college; work harder on GPA; review course load and make necessary changes.

4. Please rate the workshop.

97% of the students rated the workshop average, above average, or excellent.

PROJECT DISCOVERY PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP

Sites: Virginia Western Community College; National Business College; Virginia Tech; Longwood College; Roanoke College

Attendance: 75 students

Goals:

1. Introduce the students to the general application procedures involved with student financial aid and the Financial Aid Form.

2. To develop an understanding that college enrollment can be accessible in spite of costs.

3. To develop an understanding that assistance may be available in various forms (grants, loans, etc.) and types (merit, need), and to develop an understanding of those forms and types.

4. To provide the students with a handout that they can refer to later.

* *

1. Were the goals for the workshop met?

   99% of the students said the goals were met.

2. What new information did you learn about Financial Aid today?

   The amount of money that is available; different kinds of financial aid that is available; how to apply for financial aid; you only need to apply for financial aid with one application; appl for financial aid early; a student has to be evaluated; save money if possible; certain types of financial aid have to be repaid; apply for Pell Grant first; about the Financial Aid For almost anyone can get aid; requirements for financial aid; one can go to college if their parents cannot afford it; the cost t attend a community college.

3. Name something that you will do as a result of the Financial Aid Workshop.

   Find out more about financial aid; plan ahead; apply early; che on scholarships; look at the different types of financial aid; start saving money; talk to parents about the need for financia aid; never let money problems stop me from attending college.

4. Please rate the workshop.

   93% of the students rated the workshop average, above average, or excellent.

PROJECT DISCOVERY PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

GOAL SETTING/LIFE PLANNING WORKSHOP

Sites: Wake Forest University; Virginia Tech; Roanoke College; Longwood College; University of Virginia

Attendance: 64 students

Goals:

1. To explore realistic short and long term goals.
2. To develop realistic objectives under each goal.
3. To review our past individually by doing a lifeline.

* *

1. Were the goals for the workshop met?

   98% of the students said the goals were met.

2. What new information did you learn about Goal Setting/Life Planning today?

   Goals should be planned; goals should be realistic; don't set goals that are too high or too low; know what you want; it is never too early to set goals; set specific goals; goals can change; if you want something, work hard and go get it; how to set goals and reach them; make decision on career early; write career plans down to understand them better; good and bad career plans; goals are based on certain aspects such as attitude, ability, etc.; learn more about yourself.

3. Name something that you will do as a result of the Goal Setting/ Life Planning Workshop.

   Plan to achieve goals in association with life; reset goals and get cracking; work on goal setting and decision making; evaluate goals; plan goals carefully; take necessary courses to meet future career; find out as much as possible about career interested in; put forth more effort; keep a calendar for progress on goals.

4. Please rate the workshop.

   100% of the students rated the workshop average, above average, or excellent.

PROJECT DISCOVERY PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

CHOOSING A COLLEGE/COLLEGE LIFE WORKSHOP

Sites: Radford University; University of North Carolina at Greensboro
James Madison University; North Carolina A&T

Attendance: 76 students

Goals:

1. To provide the students with factors to be considered with choos ing a college.

2. To develop an understanding of the importance of visiting a college before making a final decision to attend.

3. To provide the students with the opportunity to interact and ta with students currently enrolled in a post-secondary institutio

4. To provide the students with an overview of what college life entails.

5. To develop an understanding that you are independent as a colle student, which will require time management and self-discipline

* *

1. Were the goals for the workshop met?

   100% of the students said the goals were met.

2. What new information did you learn about Choosing a College/Colle Life today?

   College is a difficult and different experience; prepare to wor hard; initiate opportunities; how to budget time for studying; academic and social life have to be balanced; college life is different from high school; you must learn how to make your own decisions; courses needed before entering college; how to handl major situations that one must face in college; what to think about while preparing for college; college lifestyles; advantag and disadvantages of the different types of colleges; one is mo independent in college; quality and accreditation of academic programs; tour the college you are interested in; what to look when choosing a college.

3. Name something that you will do as a result of the Choosing a College/College Life Workshop.

   Tour different colleges; place attending and finishing college a goal; work harder; take subjects of interest; be more mature; join more social activities; take required courses and maintain good GPA; plan ahead; compare colleges; develop self-discipline think about the type of degree I want to acquire; learn as much as possible about the college I choose.

4. Please rate the workshop.

97% of the students rated the workshop average, above average, or excellent.

PROJECT DISCOVERY

COLLEGE OPTION ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Two-year Summary Data
from
1983-84 and 1984-85

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June, 1986

After completing two years of operation it is now possible to better gauge the effectiveness of Project Discovery as a program which assists minority and low-income youth previously excluded from postsecondary education to set college goals and become the first in their families to attend college.

I. Demographic Profile

Using demographic data on the 344 students enrolled in Project Discovery in 1983-84 and 1984-85 a profile of the typical student can be seen. This student would be black (78% were), a female (65%), a sophomore (69%), attending William Fleming High School (52%). She would be first generation college (50%), living with her mother (49%) and below the poverty level (58%).

Through examining the demographic data it becomes obvious that Project Discovery is doing quite well in targeting those students it aimed for: low-income, minority, first generation college.

II. College Intentions

Juniors who participated in Project Discovery during the 1983-84 school year were given a senior follow-up questionnaire near the end of school for 1984-85. Among the 35 seniors who responded, almost half (49%) had taken the SAT and been accepted into college. These results are particularly significant considering the fact that these were students who would not ordinarily have considered college to be an option for themselves. Additionally their participation occurred in the first year of Project Discovery's operation, a time when the program might not have been expected to have as great an impact as it would in successive years.

Project Discovery was credited for influencing students' college choices as well as their choice of study. More than half (51%) of the students intending to attended college cited Project Discovery as an influence in their major field of study. Nearly one-third (29%) indicated their selection of a college resulted from Project Discovery campus visits.

III. Effect of Project Discovery Activities

Since visits to college campuses and workshops on topics related to college attendance (study skills, financial aid, choosing a college, goal setting) are used by Project Discovery to encourage student interest in postsecondary education, participation in these activities is important. During the two-year period being evaluated the majority of students (69.6%) attended six or seven workshops and visited between four and six different college campuses. Most students (94.4%) gave high evaluations to campus visitations as being valuable experiences. A further commentary on this was reflected by the seniors accepted into college who attributed their selection of a university to being the result of Project Discovery campus visits (29%).

Changes in academic curriculum also occurred as a result of Project Discovery participation. More than half of the students (60%) added one or two courses because of being in Project Discovery; over a quarter (26%) added or planned to add a math course. During the second year of Project Discovery 8.3% of the participants decided to take calculus, a definite change from the first year when no students ventured such a change!

IV. Attitude Changes Regarding College

Utilizing a matched pairs group design of the T-Tests of Significant Difference the Project Discovery evaluator tested the statistics on parent and student attitudes toward attending college. Through pre- and post evaluations students and parents were compared to themselves before and after completing the Project Discovery program. The most important finding revealed that both parents and students significantly changed their ideas regarding the possibility of college.

Staff experienced great difficulty in getting parent questionnaires returned only later to discover that parents were functionally illiterate and were having their children complete the forms for them!

Before their child participated in Project Discovery only one-fifth (20%) of the parents were very serious about their children attending college and themselves being able to guide them toward the necessary steps. (Actually the number is probably even smaller when viewed in light of what Project Discovery staff learned about some parents completing questionnaires.) After Project Discovery involvement this percentage more than doubled (from 20% before to 42% afterward). Additionally the parents' knowledge of financial aid availability and a good understanding of how to pursue it almost tripled after program participation (from 12.3% to 30.6%). A significant change also occurred in the percentage of parents who thought their children had a very good or excellent chance of attending college (39% before the program, but 52% afterward).

Statistics on students who were very serious about attending college and knew what steps to follow changed even more dramatically, more than quadrupling from only 13 percent at the beginning of program participation to 55 percent after completing Project Discovery. Half of the students felt they had a good understanding of how to pursue financial assistance whereas less than one-third felt this way at the beginning of program participation.

V. Staff, Program Effectiveness

Student evaluations of staff and workshops were impressively high. An overwhelming percentage (98) of students participating in Project Discovery felt they were treated well by the staff and would recommend the program to a friend. Nearly all (99%) gave the staff a high or above average rating.

A large percentage (87) of students reviewed the workshops as being well prepared and presented in an understandable manner. Nearly the same percentage (86) perceived them to be valuable experiences. Students in both years of the program found the financial aid workshop to be most helpful.

VI. Summary

Based on evaluations of students and parents participating in the first two years of Project Discovery, the program can be seen as favorably influencing students' decisions to pursue a college education. The program also impacted on students adding one or more courses to their academic curricula. After Project Discovery participation parents became more serious about their children attending college and perceived themselves as able to guide them through the necessary steps. More parents viewed college attendance as a very good or excellent possibility for their children.

Students were favorably impressed by Project Discovery staff and program content. Campus visits were beneficial in influencing students' college choices; the financial aid workshop was seen as most helpful.

Demographic data from the first two years demonstrates that Project Discovery is serving the low-income, minority and first generation college population it intended to target. Increasing numbers of parents and students who, after program participation, perceive college as an attainable goal further illustrate the impressive progress which Project Discovery is making toward achieving its objectives.